The Congregationalist

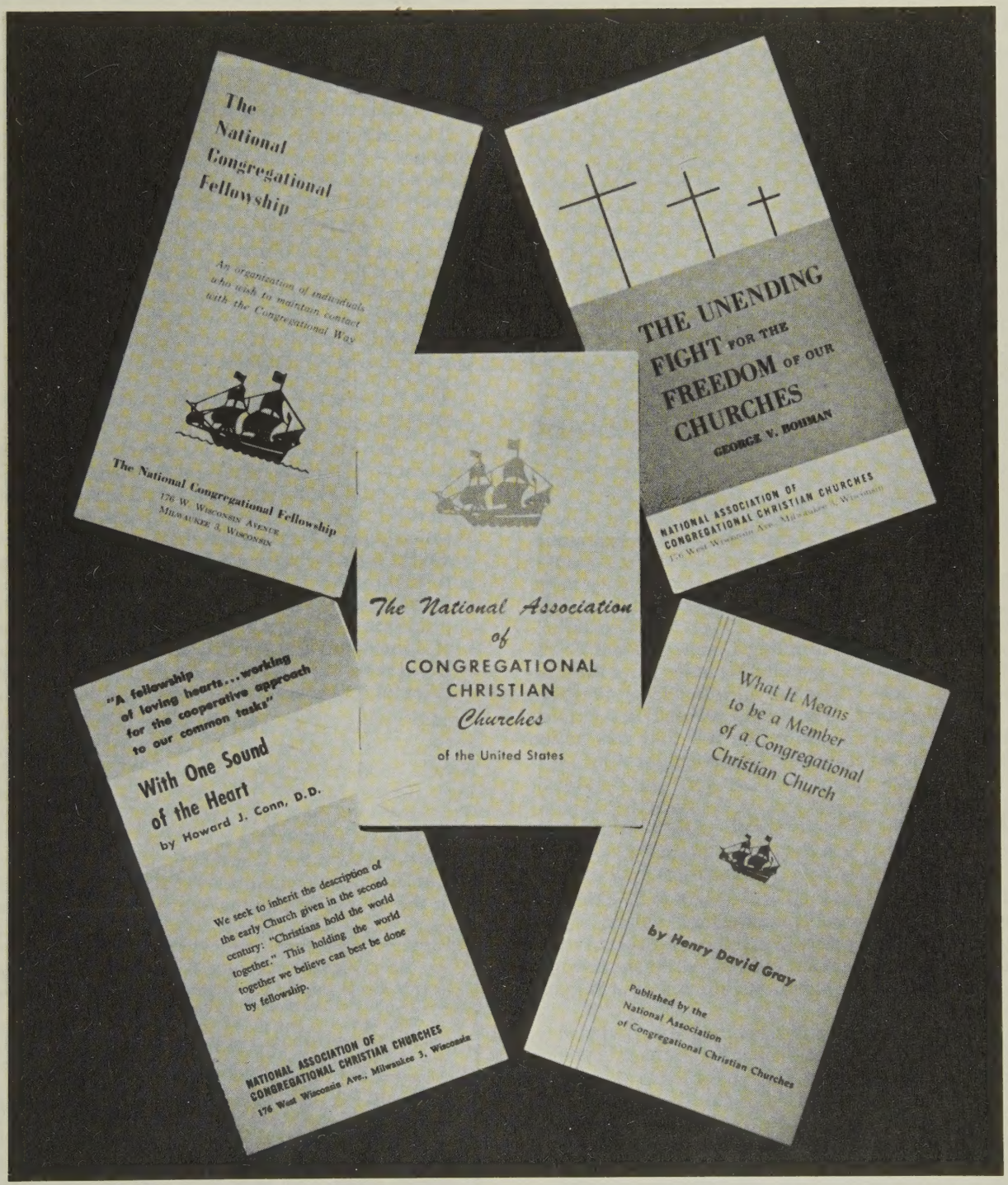
The National Congregational Fellowship
An organization of individuals who wish to maintain contact with the Congregational Way
The National Congregational Fellowship
176 W. Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee 3, Wisconsin
THE UNENDING FIGHT FOR THE FREEDOM OF OUR CHURCHES
GEORGE V. BOHMAN
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
The National Association of CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN Churches of the United States
"A fellowship of loving hearts... working for the cooperative approach to our common tasks"
With One Sound of the Heart
by Howard J. Conn, D.D.
We seek to inherit the description of the early Church given in the second century: "Christians hold the world together." This holding the world together we believe can best be done by fellowship.
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
176 West Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee 3, Wisconsin
What It Means to be a Member of a Congregational Christian Church
by Henry David Gray
Published by the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches

Photo by John G. Towns, Holbrook, Mass.

VOLUME 4 **SEPTEMBER, 1961** **NUMBER 8**

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." — Galatians 5:1

NEWS OF CONGREGATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS

MASSACHUSETTS FELLOWSHIP STARTED

On July 16, 1961, a group of Massachusetts Congregationalists, met at Wachogue Community Congregational Church in Springfield. At this meeting, the Massachusetts Congregational Christian Fellowship was organized to perpetuate the principles of Congregationalism in Massachusetts and to offer fellowship and assistance to continuing Congregational Christian Churches. This Fellowship is for both Churches and individuals devoted to the Congregational Way.

The meeting opened with an inspiring worship service led by Rev. Joseph Simone in the beautiful sanctuary of this fine, new church. The business meeting was conducted in Fellowship Hall. The following officers were elected: Chairman, Rev. Howard E. Munson, Springfield; Secretary, Mrs. Sydney G. Abbot, Westford; Pastoral Relations, Rev. Joseph J. Russell, Melrose; Treasurer, Rev. Joseph Simone, Chicopee Falls; Constitution and By-Laws, Mr. John Auchter, Springfield. The Executive Committee consists of the officers named above and the following: The Rev. George W. Brown, Jr., Fall River; Mr. Robert Powers, Springfield; and Mr. Sydney G. Abbot, Westford. Among those present were Rev. Roy Gilmour Pavy, D.D. and Mrs. Pavy of Chester, Connecticut, who told of the experience of the Connecticut Congregational Fellowship.

Of special interest were the comments of Mr. Auchter, a Springfield attorney, who raised the question as to whether the delegates at the May Conference meeting had acted beyond the scope of their authority. Mr. Auchter stated that haste in setting up Associations and a Conference of continuing Congregational Christian Churches at this time might hinder the future organization of those Churches, and that legal questions must be settled first. The group favored the forming of local fellowships or clubs but felt that this action should be initiated by those interested locally.

WESTERN MICHIGAN CHURCHES MEET

Following a letter sent out on June 18 to 29 Churches in Western Michigan and Northwestern Indiana, signed by six people who gathered at the Jackson Avenue Church in Muskegon, much interest has been shown in the formation of a Regional Fellowship of Churches in that vicinity.

As a result, a meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 13, to be held in the Jackson Avenue Church, Muskegon, which will give further consideration to the subject, and if deemed desirable the Churches represented will be invited to elect formal representation to carry out the organization under discussion.

Further report on the September 13 meeting will appear in the November CONGREGATIONALIST. If formed, this fellowship will work in friendly cooperation with the Eastern Michigan group already under way. Rev. Howard E. Bull of Saranac is Temporary Scribe of the Western Michigan body.

MICHIGAN COUNCIL ACTIVE

One of the most active organizations for the promotion of the Congregational Way is in Michigan, where the Michigan Congregational Council omitted its August meeting only because so many of its members would be at Cheyenne at the National Association Annual Meeting. The September meeting is already scheduled for Saturday, September 9, at the Arbor Grove Church in Jackson.

The enthusiasm and dedication of the individual members of this Council are shown by the fact that some of them drive a long distance to attend. The distance record thus far is held by Mrs. Asa H. Case of Benzonia, who travels 400 miles to be present.

As soon as the Churches began voting on the Constitution for the United Church of Christ, this Council encouraged the holding of area meetings for fellowship and discussion. Meetings during the Autumn were held in Merrill, Detroit (First Church), and the Arbor Grove Church in Jackson.

The purposes of the Council as set forth in its By-Laws are:

> "To provide fellowship for members of Congregational Churches who are devoted to the Congregational Faith and Order as it has been and is traditionally practised; to provide a means by which such Congregationalists may consult and advise together upon matters of common concern to them, both temporal and spiritual; and to aid in such ways as may from time to time be appropriate and proper, the continuance and growth of those Christian practices and purposes which have been the historic and accepted characteristics of Congregational Churches."

The Michigan Council's officers are: Moderator, J. P. Karr, M.D., of Arbor Grove Church, Jackson; Assistant Moderator, Rev. John D. Rose, Lathrup Village; Scribe, Mrs. E. T. Ives, North Church, Detroit; Treasurer, Mr. Frederic MacLean, First Church, Detroit; and Corresponding Secretary, Miss Evelyn Bumgarner of Plymouth Church, Lansing. Five Trustees and an Advisory Committee of 22 members are working with the officers in guiding the work of the Council.

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CHURCH EXTENSION

First Fruit of the "Ten Dollar Club"

"The Ten Dollar Club is a practical demonstration of Congregationalism in action and a real reward for our faith." So said a spokesman for the Fair Oak Congregational Church in Cedar Rapids, Iowa — the first Church to benefit from the newly formed Ten Dollar Club.

"We started this Church on faith," the spokesman continued, "and we started construction of our chapel the same way. To us, the money we have received from the Ten Dollar Club is a demonstration of the rewards that come from faith in God and belief in the Congregational Way."

The first check from the Ten Dollar Club was presented to the Fair Oak Church by the Rev. F. Willard Kime of the National Association's Milwaukee office during ground breaking ceremonies on June 18th. The Rev. Norman Ream of the First Congregational Church in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, is at the head of the Club and has forwarded additional amounts to the new congregation.

The Fair Oak Church, which held its first services in a school cafeteria on January 8th of this year, expects to occupy the new building not later than Mid-September.

The new chapel, which is currently under construction on the wooded site overlooking one of Cedar Rapids' newest residential areas, is a two-level building of frame construction. The lower level features a kitchen, bathrooms and classrooms with doors opening onto a patio and playground. The upper level provides a sanctuary with a seating capacity of 150.

Unique features of the modestly priced building are the split-foyer entry and the glass sliding doors at one end of the sanctuary which permit a view of the wooded hills beyond the church site.

A church spokesman said that when the dreamed of "big church" and education buildings are erected in days to come, the present chapel will probably be converted to a youth building.

Photo by Curley's Studio, Cedar Rapids

Left to Right: George Stangel, Chairman Board of Trustees; Rev. F. Willard Kime, Robert H. Sterenborg, Pastor.

Speaking again of the Ten Dollar Club, a Fair Oak member said, "You'll never know what a thrill it is to realize that people we don't even know, from all over the country, are helping us build our church. Our chapel will stand as a monument to the very real fellowship of Congregational men and women."

ALL NEW ENGLAND MEETING PLANNED FOR OCTOBER

As a result of the meeting held in Boston on June 16, (reported in the August CONGREGATIONALIST, p. 12) arrangements are under way for a two day meeting, October 16-17, at Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, of New England Continuing Congregational Churches. Invitations will be sent to all the Churches in the six-state area which have not voted to become a part of the United Church of Christ.

Wolfeboro, which is known as the oldest summer resort in America, is located on Lake Winnepesaukee and is of easy access by highway from all parts of New England. There are motels in abundance in the vicinity, and some of the Wolfeboro homes will be available for overnight entertainment. The First Christian Church is a member of the National Association and the First Congregational Church has withdrawn from the New Hampshire Conference and the Carroll-Strafford Association.

Details regarding the meeting will be contained in the invitation which will be mailed out soon, and will be published in the October CONGREGATIONALIST. The chairman of the Program Committee is Dr. Roy Gilmour Pavy, Connecticut Congregational Fellowship, Main and Buckingham Streets, Hartford 3, Connecticut.

WOMEN'S WORK

MRS. ROBERT E. COLLINS, Chairman
1014 FLORAL DRIVE, S.E., GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

OUR WOMEN'S GIFT

"Bricks for the Anchorage Church"

Mrs. Ralph J. Rieger, Pomona, California

Our Congregational Church in Pomona was founded seventy-five years ago by people who must have loved the New England traditions, for we are named Pilgrim Church, and such evocative words as Plymouth, Priscilla, and Mayflower have been given to various groups within the Church. For many years our Women's Auxiliary has enjoyed fellowship with the Congregational Women of Southern California and the Southwest but since Pilgrim Church voted to remain Congregational and to join the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches we no longer support the enterprises of the United Church. We work through the National Association and are happy to find there many congenial associations together with appreciation and continuation of prized traditions.

One happy habit we have long practiced is contributing to the Women's Gift. We like to feel that we are uniting with other church women to accomplish more than we can do by ourselves. Last year we sent our money to Piedmont College in Georgia and we are happy that our Church as a whole is continuing to send money there.

This year we learned that, beside Piedmont College, the Commission on Women's Work of the National Association was recommending help for church extension projects. We found that a group of people in Anchorage, Alaska were organizing a Church — the first Congregational Church in the whole state — and our Women's Auxiliary decided that the Women's Project this year should be to help the new church in Anchorage. As chairman of the Women's Project, it has been my pleasure since October, when this undertaking was approved by our Auxiliary, to bring information about the new Church and the new state of Alaska to our women.

I wrote to Mrs. R. H. Hampton in Anchorage and received an immediate reply. Mrs. Hampton told of their membership, their plans and hopes, and of their delight and surprise at the interest being shown in their new Church.

Dramatizing the Need

In order to stimulate the imaginations and increase the interest of our women, I persuaded my husband to construct a small church. Showing a partially built church with bricks only a few rows high seemed to dramatize the need of help in the building. "Bricks for the Anchorage Church" became the theme of our Thankoffering in November when we collected almost two hundred dollars.

Guilds and individuals have added to this sum in various ways. One guild has a covered box with two slits in the lid which they pass at each meeting. One slit is for the monthly guild dues and the other is for the Women's Gift. Another guild served supper to the Congregational Club of Southern California meeting at our church and shared the profits between the Alaska project and their special responsibility, the junior choir.

At the last Auxiliary meeting of the year, our Women's Project Gift, totaling four hundred dollars, was dedicated with a representation of the finished church as shown.

This year's Women's Project has been a most rewarding experience for me. I hope that before too long the real church will rise on Northern Lights Boulevard in Anchorage as planned, and that I may visit it some day.

MAINE WOMEN MEET

Women from a number of Maine Congregational Churches were invited to the summer home of Mrs. Ernest S. Crosby at Blue Hill on July 27, and following the luncheon Mrs. Charles T. Brown of Bucksport led an inspiring devotional service.

The many activities of the various commissions of the National Association were reviewed, and comprehensive addresses given before women's groups by Mrs. Robert Collins and Mrs. William Schmitz of the Commission on Women's Work were read. Copies of these are soon to be made available. These addresses cover the history of Women's Work in the National Association since its organization in 1955.

Miss Helen E. Graves of South Congregational Church, Hartford, Connecticut, who has a summer home in Maine, was a guest at the meeting and spoke of the early days in the National Association.

After considerable discussion it was decided to explore the possibilities of a Maine Fellowship of Congregational Women. Plans are now being made for an all-day Fall meeting on Wednesday, October 11, at the Elm Street Congregational Church in Bucksport. All women interested in continuing Congregationalism are invited.

WOMEN'S WORK — *Continued from page 4*

MICHIGAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHWOMEN

Mrs. Albert Castelli, Detroit

The Michigan Congregational Churchwomen assembled for a workshop and a day of devotion, fellowship and study at the First Congregational Church of Pontiac on Friday, April 21, 1961. One hundred thirty-eight women, representing nineteen Churches, were in attendance. They came with a positive outlook for Congregationalism — to protect it, preserve it, and extend it. This meeting was called by the Steering Committee upon the request and invitation of the Women's Fellowship of the host Church.

A brief report can furnish only the highlights of this extremely well-planned day. Greetings and introductions were made by Mrs. Albert Castelli, Coordinator of the Michigan Congregational Churchwomen. Rev. Malcolm Burton, minister of the host Church, gave devotions. The keynote address, "The A's Have It," was inspiringly and charmingly presented by Mrs. William E. Schmitz of Allegan, who is a member of the Commission on Women's Work. Following her remarks, the group dispersed to three seminars — Missions, Christian Education, and Program Planning — led by Rev. John D. Rose, Community Congregational Church, Lathrup Village, a member of the Missionary Society of the National Association; Mrs. George Berkaw, Jr., Mayflower Congregational Church, Detroit, a member of the Commission on Christian Education; and Mrs. George V. Bohman, First Congregational Church, Royal Oak, Program Chairman of the Michigan Congregational Churchwomen, respectively.

The Coordinator explained two pertinent needs: one, financial support to continue the Michigan Congregational Churchwomen's work; and two, written suggestions as to how the Steering Committee might better serve the women. The response to both needs was heartwarming.

The value-laden day drew to a close with a delightful climax — the presentation of "Five Vignettes," the National Association's prize winning play for 1960, written by Mrs. George Berkaw, Jr., and enacted by the Pilgrim Players of the First Congregational Church, Royal Oak, under the able direction of Rev. Harry W. Clark, Assistant Minister, Royal Oak.

LAYMEN OPPOSE FURTHER UNION

An Editorial in THE MICHIGAN CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE (Methodist). July 13, 1961. Reprinted by permission.

A survey of Michigan Methodist laymen has revealed that they are not enthusiastic about union with other churches. Fewer than three in ten favor such unification. The survey was conducted by the Church's Department of Research and Survey and is especially revealing in view of the talk about uniting the United Presbyterian in the U.S.A., the Protestant Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ and The Methodist Church.

We do not know all the reasons behind the decisions of our Michigan laymen. Doubtless they are wide and varied. But we do believe their position is well taken. Just on general principles any further substantial increase in the size of our church should be taken with caution. There has been a tendency for the unificationists to want unity for unity's sake. This is not a sufficient reason in our opinion. A church too big can be as bad off as a church too small. Where the happy medium is has not been determined but we seriously feel that anything as large as 20 million is too big. This would be the approximate size if the above named four churches were to unite.

Questions About Unification

Our present size of ten million is bound to grow. Unification with the Evangelical United Brethren Church, now contemplated, will add some but not enough to raise the issue of size. There are, of course, other considerations which are more likely to prevent unification, such as the belief in Apostolic Succession and the use of fermented wine in the Holy Communion. Then, too, there is something to be said for a church bearing its particular witness. Standardization and conformity have their disadvantages as well as their advantages. Who can say where the line should be drawn? We would not attempt to draw such a line except in a very general way and would turn on the caution light and say, "Let's take it easy and give ourselves plenty of time."

Since unification of the three Methodist branches in 1939, our own church has suffered many growing pains and still does. If that is the case after more than 20 years, what would it be if four churches with even greater differences were to unite? It is frankly something we don't get excited about and our laymen seem to feel the same way.

Cooperation, Not Conformity

However, our laymen are thoroughly committed to unity through Councils of Churches where we can still bear our individual testimonies and yet operate as one in those areas where cooperation is possible. We are a long way from making the councils what they ought to be. We do not know of a council, local, state, national or world-wide, that doesn't need and deserve greater support of every kind from its member denominations. Too many give only lip service. Some will argue that this is a reason why more denominations ought to unite so that closer unity can be effected in at least some areas. Our answer is that if we can't cooperate better than we are through the councils, we aren't ready for closer unity with other churches. We have learned through Methodist unification that unity can't be legislated entirely. It is a matter of the mind and heart and until the minds and hearts of Christians are more in harmony, real unification is impossible.

THE NATURE OF FELLOWSHIP

Harry R. Butman, D.D., Los Angeles, California

With the establishment of the United Church of Christ, the long struggle for the continuation of the Congregational Way enters into a second phase — the rediscovery of fellowship. The first stage of the battle was to maintain the independence and autonomy of the local Church. This battle was won legally with the admission that participation in the merger could only take place by the voluntary action of an independent local Church. That many local Churches elected to make their final act of absolute autonomy the surrender of their absolute autonomy is now beside the point. Today's central question, now that many former Congregational Churches have elected to dwell under the roof of a single national church, is whether or not that free relation of affection we call fellowship is a tie sufficiently strong to bind complete local Churches in effective labor and Christian love.

It has been curious and sad to note, during the long merger controversy, that many pastors and laymen have been quite incapable of seeing that there actually exists an ecclesiastical bond called fellowship, and that it is separate and distinct from any form of connectionalism. That certain jurists have shared this incapacity is not surprising, since no man, however impartial his conscious legal mind may strive to be, is ever wholly free from the deep unconscious mouldings and sets of his early training, particularly in so emotional an area as religion. But that so many earnest and able pastors and laymen could see no significant difference between congregational and presbyterial forms of polity is a perplexing thing. The perplexity does not stem from the fact that some, having seen the difference, felt it to be of no importance. The deep puzzle is that so many simply did not know what fellowship was, or how it differed from the relationships between local congregations of a national church. I suggest that one reason for this blindness is that there exists no formal and generally accepted definition of fellowship.

Careful Definition Needed

Consider carefully what I am saying. I am not saying that there are no definitions of Congregationalism as a whole. There are many such, and they all agree that the Congregational Way is dually characterized by the autonomy of the local Church and the fellowship of the Churches. But while autonomy under Christ is precisely spelled out in terms of freedom, power, and completeness, no such analytical attention is given to the concept of fellowship. Not even the Report of the Committee on Free Church Polity and Unity, the most comprehensive modern study of Congregationalism as it is in the documents and in practice, contains any definition of fellowship.

So the failure to differentiate between Congregationalism and the connectional forms of church government — papal, episcopal, presbyterial — does not lie wholly in the fact that these polities, being legalistic in essence, are capable of clearer descriptions of the machinery of interchurch functioning than is the more diffuse, emotional, and intangible reality of fellowship. The failure that has troubled Congregationalism in the great merger controversy lies rather in the fact that half our witness (and that the most distinctive half) has never been intellectually crystallized and verbally formulated, and so never taught and cherished.

As a result, current notions of fellowship are serious distortions. Some have considered fellowship a mere sentimental fog or haze, a thing without substance. Others have meagerly equated fellowship with financial support of the denominational program. If we of today's free Churches are to develop a living fellowship, we must profit by the past generation's error of omission, and be able to give a reason for the faith that is in us. Here is a tentative definition of fellowship, to my admittedly scanty knowledge the first to be publicly made in recent years. It is offered in the hope that wiser and more widely read men than myself will correct and condense it, to the great end that the reality itself will be intelligently and faithfully honored among the Churches of our Way.

Love, Not Law

We may begin to define the Congregational principle of fellowship by a series of negatives. Fellowship has no elements of compulsion or force; no ecclesiastical body external to the local Church can exercise authority over it. In fellowship no finding of a council has more force than force of wisdom in it lies. Fellowship obeys no book of discipline; its manuals are compilations of useful forms and procedures, not legal principles. Fellowship is no matter of money; it may not be denied because of unpaid dues. Fellowship is without judicatories, owns no binding national creed, knows no heresy trials. Fellowship exerts no political pressure on Churches or men, grants no hierarchic status to officials, is not at home in great organizational structures, is not legislative.

Simply and positively expressed, *the fellowship of the Churches is a free relation of affection.* It is clearly recognized in the New Testament that while men do not and ought not to live alone, they cannot truly be held together by external necessity or compulsion, for which the New Testament Greek word is *Anagke.* They must be joined by love of the brethren, good will, benevolence. (*Agape.*) In the New Testament we find the Churches associated with one another as equals, with neither one Church claiming authority over the others, nor the several Churches lording it over the one. The early Churches lived together in an atmosphere of mutual love, not in a relationship of dominance and submission.

The Principle Has Been Successful

For nearly four hundred years Congregationalists have made a serious and successful application of the principle of the fellowship of the Churches. Congregational Churches have walked together out of mutual desire, not because a book of discipline or official mandate has made them do so. Their association is voluntary, devised for mutual counsel, help, and inspiration. In fellowship the ultimate power lies with Christ, who is the head of each local Church, and whose informing Spirit gives a common mind to the several Churches.

Continued at bottom of column 1, page 7

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP

Children of the Pilgrim Fathers Come Back

Under the heading given above, the SOUTH LONDON PRESS reported with enthusiasm the visit of eight members of the National Association Pilgrim Fellowship who made the British Pilgrimage under the leadership of Rev. Robert H. Scanland of Pomona, California.

Under date of July 4, this British paper stated, "The pilgrims, aged from 15 to 20, tee-shirted and bobby-soxed, are on a visit. . . . In the next six weeks they will visit Congregational and independent Churches in this country which sent out the Founding Fathers in the Mayflower."

A First Hand Report

Pam Swan of North Canton, Connecticut, writes, "We Americans are really enjoying the hospitality and friendship of the English people. In fact they have taken such good care of us, especially in keeping us fed, that today we are fasting. The fasting is also in regard for the hungry children of the world whom we are to see in pictures at St. Martin's-in-the-Field.

"Yesterday, July 11, Dr. Belden invited us to tea at his home and we had a most relaxing time, since there was a large garden in which to run around, lie, sit and feast the eyes on trees and grass. Southwark doesn't possess much greenery . . .

"On Friday we start for Scotland for a fortnight. We are looking forward to that. . . . Everything over here is fine including the weather. The one problem for the Church in Southwark is the addition of members. We have twice called on people in the flats nearby to invite them to come to church activities. Tonight we call on more families."

Continued from page 6

The Congregational documents which deal with the relationships of the Churches have consistently maintained that power under God resides in the local Church, and that love, not law, is the link that binds Churches together. The fellowship of the Churches is a free relation of affection.

One of the purposes of the pilgrimage is to give a hand with church building. The first picture on this page shows Miss Katherine Mitchell, minister of the Pilgrim Fathers Church, pointing out to the pilgrims the plaque commemorating the sailing of the Mayflower from the Thames in 1620.

To Greece Also

Another expedition of the National Association Pilgrim Fellowship was the Greek pilgrimage, in charge of Rev. George Weekly of Forest Hills, New York. The second picture shows some of the members of this party at a "briefing session" in New York before leaving. Rev. Philotheos Zikas conducted this party, which in addition to study and sight-seeing has been helping in the reconstruction of Protestant church buildings in that country.

The young people on the British pilgrimage were Charles Disselhorst of Burlington, Iowa, Ed Dean of Hartford, Connecticut, Barbara Weiland of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, Pam Swan of North Canton, Connecticut, Earl Keyser, Jr. of Marshalltown, Iowa, Warren Hall of Pomona, California, Evelyn Wilson of Springfield, Massachusetts, and Paula Vander Linden, of Pomona, California.

The Greek pilgrimage consisted of Lucina Young, Karl Uhlig, Jim Abbott, Douglas Swift, Ellen Gray, Diane Brownlee, Carolyn Scheller, Roberta Walker and David Cooper.

PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP OFFICERS ELECTED

The voting for officers of the National Association Pilgrim Fellowship has been completed. Larry Carnes, Jr., of the Wachogue Community Congregational Church, Springfield, Massachusetts, has been elected president, and Lee Zachman of Green Bay, Wisconsin, secretary. The other officers hold over until next year.

AS THE TWIG IS BENT

An Editorial

Everyone knows the rest of the proverb: "As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined." Cannot this be applied to churches as well as to individuals? Do not the directions in which a new ecclesiastical organization points give a reasonable indication of what that organization is to be in the future?

Believing that this is the case, and knowing that there are still a great many Congregationalists who have not finally made up their minds as to whether or not they and their Churches will eventually join the United Church of Christ, these glimpses of some things that happened at the last real meeting of the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches and at the General Synod of the United Church of Christ which followed it, are presented for careful thought as to their meaning.

About Annuities and Mortgages

Many readers of THE CONGREGATIONALIST will remember that at the 1958 General Council meeting in Boston, resolutions were adopted approving the votes of the Annuity Fund for Congregational Ministers and of the Congregational Church Building Society which exempted from the provisions in Annuity Fund contracts and in Grant Mortgages, ministers and Churches which might withdraw from their Associations because of unwillingness to enter the United Church of Christ. These exemptions, however, were qualified by the statement that if the minister or Church were to join "any other denomination or sect," the provisions in the contracts would be enforced.

When the Philadelphia General Council had before it resolutions reaffirming these actions taken in 1958, questions were asked regarding the meaning of some of those qualifying statements. For example, one question was asked, "Will a Church which joins the National Association be regarded as having joined another 'denomination or sect'?"

The answer given by the Chairman of the Executive Committee was that nobody could now predict what the National Association would become, so no reply was possible to the question. In the minds of several of the delegates present, true as Mr. Bladen's statement was if taken by itself, there was a lack of candor and directness in the words. If ministers and Churches seriously disturbed at the thought of joining the United Church of Christ are not to be told clearly what effect staying out and joining the National Association will have, how can they feel confident that in the United Church the actions resulting from their conscientious scruples will not subject them to penalties?

About the Social Action Report

Many questions have been asked about the action of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ concerning the admission of Communist China to the United Nations, and to recognition by the United States. When the Report of the Council for Christian Social Action was under discussion, a motion was made to delete the section of the report which favored the admission and recognition of this Communist government. After some discussion the amendment was overwhelmingly defeated, and then the report itself was approved.

True though it may be that many high-minded citizens believe that to admit Communist China would be a wise step, there is another consideration when it comes to the approval of it by the United Church of Christ. In Paragraph 18 of the Constitution of this church, it is stated, "Local churches of the United Church of Christ are represented in the General Synod by the delegates from the Conferences to which they belong."

On a purely legalistic basis it may be that "representatives" of the local Churches are justified in committing a national church to a position on a controversial subject regarding which they have never been instructed by the church members. But morally how can these "representatives" justify their action in agreeing to put a religious body on record as favoring something of which many of their equally earnest and sincere Christian members do not approve?

The incongruity of national religious bodies expressing approval or disapproval of political questions is clearly shown. Protest though they may that they are speaking only for themselves, the interpretation inevitably put on such votes by the public press and the reading public is that the church itself has spoken.

About One Big Church

Great interest has been shown in many quarters on the attitude the General Synod would take toward what are often called "The Blake-Pike Proposals." The action of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in Buffalo a few weeks prior to the Philadelphia meetings, in requesting the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church to join with it in issuing an invitation to the Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ to participate in conversations directed toward a union of these groups and other interested bodies, brought to a definite head the ideas put forth last December at the San Francisco meeting of the National Council of Churches.

In accordance with a recommendation from the Executive Council of the United Church, the Synod voted that if and when this invitation was received from the Presbyterians and Episcopalians, it should be accepted. Conversations having previously taken place with the International Convention of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) looking toward merger with the United Church of Christ, this denomination will obviously be included in the conversations approved by the Synod. (More recent reports state officially that the discussions with the Disciples will begin later this month.)

So many statements have been made in debates and discussions concerning the merger that the eventual forming of one big church is not contemplated, that the United Church of Christ is simply a union of two denominations so much alike that a merger was natural, it is well to ponder the statement made by Dr. Ben M. Herbster, newly-elected President of the United Church of Christ. "If the Congregational Christian Churches

Continued on bottom of page 9

Congregational Bookshelf

Rev. Royal G. Davis, Los Angeles, California

The United States has been profoundly influenced by religion ever since the landing of the Pilgrims, the later formation of the Massachusetts Bay Company and the much later Declaration of Independence. Princeton University has embarked upon a significant publishing venture to show the full impact of the Hebrew-Christian tradition upon American life. Two volumes are now available, three more being printed.

"The Shaping of American Religion" deals in broad outline with such vital subjects as the course of Christian theology, religion and science, revivalism and traditionalism, democracy and the covenantal theory of government. This volume also surveys the history of major and minor forms of organized piety in our Republic.

"Religious Perspectives In American Culture," a symposium with ten contributors, probes the more specific ways in which belief has been translated into music, architecture, poetry, political action and popular novels. Congregationalists should be interested in this study because so many phases of American culture bear our imprint. The son of a Congregational minister was first to sign the Declaration of Independence. The wife of a Congregational minister wrote **"Uncle Tom's Cabin."** Colonial meetinghouses on the village green mark the history of American architecture. The Bay Psalm Book and the later work of Lowell Mason illustrate Congregational influence upon American music.

If these first two volumes are representative, Princeton University will have provided ministers and scholars with standard reference works of exceptional calibre. They combine careful study with judicious evaluation. (Princeton University Press, volume I $8.50, volume II $7.50)

Continued from page 8

and the Evangelical and Reformed Church, with all their differences of background, polity and traditions, could come together and demonstrate such a spirited unity as is evident here, there are few if any Christian denominations that cannot take such a step. . . . We promised at the beginning to be not only a united church but a uniting church."

These words should be considered carefully in the light of the fact that there is nothing in the Constitution of the United Church of Christ to provide that local Churches shall have any voice, either in the framing of the provisions of future unions, or in approving them after they are framed. And they should be considered carefully also in the light of the far greater numbers of members, and the noticeably different principles of church government, in the other denominations which were named in these resolutions. As has been asked many times — and never satisfactorily answered — "Could the guarantees of Paragraph 21 of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ possibly be included in the fundamental documents of a church in which these other denominations would have the predominant influence?"

THE GENIUS OF CONGREGATIONALISM

Walter G. Couch, Jr., D.D., Wichita, Kansas

The genius of Congregationalism is that through its double emphasis on freedom *and* fellowship it has provided a dynamic and creative force in American Protestantism which has helped gradually to change the narrowminded, bigoted and ruthless competition of centuries past into the more warm-hearted, cooperative, and mutually respectful attitude which prevails today among the clergy and laity of most of the major denominations. There are still some American Christian groups which believe that they have the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and who carry on a constant ecclesiastical war against the rest of us who believe that there is truth and goodness in every Church of Christ, and who say, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity"; and "We agree to differ; we resolve to love; we unite to serve". Old-timers have memories of years past when there was a great lack of cordiality, not only between Protestants and Catholics, but also between Protestant groups! One of the wonderful characteristics of our day is the friendly, understanding, and tolerant spirit which prevails among people of all religious persuasions.

Today there is a great movement called "ecumenicity". This describes a desire on the part of many people to organize One Great Protestant Church and, finally, union with Roman Catholicism. There is considerable evidence, usually ignored by the "ecumenists" that this is an impossible goal. But there is a possible goal for greater and friendlier cooperation among all Christians in freedom *and* fellowship through existing councils of Churches (which, incidentally, were organized primarily as a result of Congregational initiative and enthusiasm). This can be increasingly accomplished without the problems of organic mergers of denominations, by a greater devotion to and application of the genius of Congregationalism. The question of which road to take is the fundamental question underlying the whole merger debate.

The Congregational Way

Visible saints, those who personally choose to be Christ-followers, are the true members of a visible Church.

A body of Christ-followers united by a particular covenant is a true, distinct and entire Church of Christ.

A particular Church, having furnished itself with officers, has all the power and privilege of a Church within itself.

The power of leading belongs to officers chosen by the people, and the power of judgment, consent and privilege to all members.

Communion is to be maintained between all Churches of Christ and counsel is to be sought in cases of difficulty.

We are bound to follow carefully the Congregational Way, always seeking more light and truth from the Scriptures.

— Signed at Hartford, February 22, 1670.

Glorious Independents

Elizabeth Laughton Claxton
Lansing, Michigan

During the period when Elizabeth Barrett was being courted by Robert Browning, and she felt that because of her poor health she should not marry him, she mustered all the arguments she could find to allay his ardor. In a letter of August 2, 1845, she wrote, "I used to go with my father always, when I was able, to the nearest dissenting chapel of the Congregationalists — from liking the simplicity of that praying and speaking without books — and a little too from disliking the theory of state churches. There is a narrowness among the dissenters which is wonderful; an acrid, grey Puritanism in the clefts of their souls: but it seems to me clear that they know what the 'liberty of Christ' *means*, far better than those do who call themselves 'churchmen'; and stand altogether, as a body, on higher ground."

As always, Robert was able to prove her point to be one in his favor. By return post, he answered, "Can it be you, my own, you past putting away, *you* are a schismatic and frequenter of Independent Dissenting Chapels? And you confess this to *me* — whose father and mother went this morning to the very Independent Chapel where they took me, all those years back, to be baptised — and where they heard this morning a sermon preached by the very minister who officiated on that other occasion! Now will you be particularly encouraged by this successful instance to bring forward any other point of disunion between us that may occur to you? Please do not . . ."

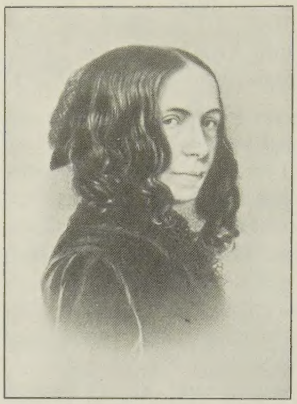

Photo by The Perry Pictures, Boston Edition

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 1809-1861

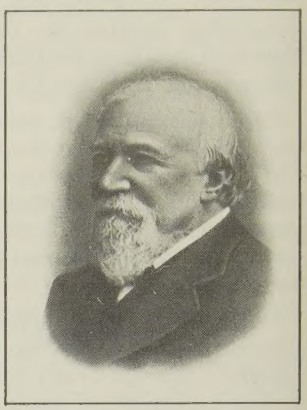

Photo by The Perry Pictures, Boston Edition

Robert Browning, 1812-1889

Six months later Elizabeth was signing her letters, "Ever and wholly your own . . ."

NEWS NOTES

Pastoral Changes. Rev. Roy Shervy of Farmland, Indiana, has been called to become Minister of Christian Education at First Church, Spencer, Iowa . . . Rev. Howard Landes of New Castle, Pennsylvania, has been called to succeed Mr. Shervy at Farmland, Indiana . . . Rev. Kendall B. Shoffner has begun work as pastor of the Congregational Church at Sutton's Bay, Michigan . . . Rev. Paul Bennehoff of the Jackson Avenue Church, Muskegon, Michigan, will become assistant pastor at Plymouth Church, Lansing, at the end of August . . . Rev. Walton E. Cole has resigned as pastor of First Church, Detroit . . . Rev. Philip J. Cleveland of Leraysville, Pennsyvlania, has accepted a call to the pastorate of First Church, New Bedford, Massachusetts, effective September 1 . . . Rev. Harold E. Le May, pastor of First Church, Eliot, Maine, retired on July 31.

Ordination at Searsport, Maine. Robert H. Sargent, a recent graduate of Bangor Theological Seminary, was ordained at Searsport, Maine on June 15. Mr. Sargent has served the First and Second Churches in Searsport as a student.

Fair Oak Calls One Of Its Own. In true Congregational style, the Fair Oak Church of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, has called one of its own members, Robert H. Sterenborg, to serve as pastor. He began his duties on June 1. In accepting this call he resigned his membership in a Cedar Rapids real estate firm.

A Correction. Our attention has been called to an erroneous statement in the article "For the Nursery Age" on page 5 of the June CONGREGATIONALIST. The First Community Church of Columbus, Ohio, which our article states was "founded by Washington Gladden" was actually founded by Rev. Oliver Wiest, pastor of the Grandview Congregational Church. The Grandview Church was founded by Dr. Gladden.

New Member Churches. As of August 1, three more Churches have voted to join the National Association. These are the First Congregational Church of Anchorage, Alaska; Slope Congregational Church of Brookfield, Ohio; and Dayton Congregational Church, Dayton, Wyoming. Five other Churches have been officially reported as voting to join, but until official certificates have been received at the Milwaukee office, these cannot be counted as members.

Our Cover Picture. We are indebted to Mr. John G. Towns of Holbrook, Massachusetts, for photographing this montage of some of the publications of the National Association. Mr. Towns has made a number of the pictures which have appeared in THE CONGREGATIONALIST. Any readers who wish to see copies of these booklets or any of the others published by the National Association may obtain them from the office at 176 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee 3, Wisconsin.

OUR DEVOTIONAL COLUMN

Rev. Lewis A. Chase, Scarborough, Maine

Theme for the Month: BUILDING OUR SPIRITUAL HOME

Suggested Reading: Matthew 5, 6, 7 with emphasis on Matthew 7: 24-27

"Population Explosion" and "Population Migration" have resulted in a tremendous amount of new building, the more important of which consists of new homes. Thinking of the adventure of constructing such a home has caused this writer to try to find a parallel in the development of a "house not made with hands" but fabricated out of the very truths of God as revealed in the life and teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What, then, are the spiritual materials to be used in our house? It seems to me that the foundation must be made of LOVE, not an easy love but love that will include a cross if need be. The timbers and framework would consist of the VISIONS, which come from Christ's teachings, and the FAITH to make them a living reality. The siding of our house would consist of RIGHTEOUSNESS with windows from which we can look out upon the world with JUSTICE, MERCY AND FORGIVENESS. The roof of this house is ETERNAL LOVE which is evidenced in IMMORTALITY. In order to have our spiritual home we must realize that it can only be wrought with diligence and SACRIFICE and the landscaping must be the "SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN."

Living in a home requires certain activities, i.e., eating, relaxing, working, fellowship and neighborliness. Such practices suggest that there must be parallel spiritual functions if we would live. Truly, feeding our souls upon the Word of God becomes a must; spending time in meditation and quietness are relaxing as well as challenging requirements; fellowship with God and Christ in prayer becomes that needful part if life would be void of loneliness. The foregoing function can only result in work and worship which becomes the very fibre of our existence. Such a life within demands an outgoing spirit and is expressed in evangelistic and missionary endeavors, for from the real home must radiate the qualities which are found within.

Prayer Eternal Father, Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer of life, we turn to Thee, seeking the Way, Truth and Life which has been revealed through Jesus Christ our Lord. We pray that having found these desired qualities, we may have the faith, courage and strength to make them ours, using them for the service of man and the glory of thy Holy Name. Amen.

To Read and Think About

At the request of some members of Continuing Congregational Churches, the following list of worthwhile books is presented to our readers.

I. *The Congregational Way:*

THE CONGREGATIONAL WAY OF LIFE, Arthur A. Rouner, Jr., Prentice Hall, ($3.60). A deeply devotional and stirring interpretation of the Congregational Way and its inner meaning.

THE FOURTH FREEDOM, Leslie Cooke, George Philips, J. M. Philips, (50 cents) Independent Press, Memorial Hall, London E. C. 4. Essays on Congregationalism and its enduring witness concerning freedom of religious thought and the Free Church in a free world.

VISIBLE SAINTS, Geoffrey F. Nuttall, ($3.50), Blackwell's, Oxford, England. A brilliant exposition of the Congregational Way, 1640-1660, during a very creative period.

II. *The Bible:*

THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE, ($3.50), available at any bookstore. This is the New Testament in modern English by an eminent team of scholars, headed by the great Congregational leader, Professor C. H. Dodd.

JESUS OF NAZARETH, Harry Emerson Fosdick, ($1.95), available at any bookstore. A stimulating and incisive portrait of the Master.

THE MASTER'S MEN, William Barclay, ($2.00), The Pilgrim Press. A rather interesting and freshly written book, giving both Biblical and legendary accounts about each one of the twelve Disciples.

THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST, James S. Stewart, ($1.50). Abingdon. A book first written for youth groups in Scotland, but of high value for intelligent people anywhere.

CRADLE OF OUR FAITH, ($3.75). News Photo Publishing Company, John C. Trever. A pictorial journey through the Holy Land with unusually fine descriptions and accurate camera work.

SHORTER ATLAS OF THE BIBLE, (approx. $3.00). Thomas Nelson & Sons. A compact introduction to the history and archeology in the Old Testament put into 196 pages — a mine of information.

AN ATLAS OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST, (75 cents), John Sterling, Fleming-Revell. A brief and very clear outline of the life of Christ. There is also a companion atlas giving the Acts and the Epistles, and one on Paul.

THE BIBLE READER'S ENCYCLOPEDIA AND CONCORDANCE, Rev. W. M. Clow, (approx. $3.00) Collins Cleartype Press. A very accurate and inclusive handbook for the guidance of any lay person in the study of the Scriptures.

Continued on page 12

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TO READ AND THINK ABOUT — *Cont. from p. 11*

III. *Worship and Devotional Life:*

THE UPWARD CALL, Henry David Gray, ($1.25). Abingdon Press. A daily devotional study of the book of Philippians designed to help readers to interpret the book for themselves.

WORSHIP, Evelyn Underhill, ($1.75), Harper. An excellent discussion of man's response to the Eternal in ritual, and symbol, in sacrament and sacrifice, in temple and Synagogue.

CHRIST IN POETRY, Thomas Curtis Clark and Hazel Davis Clark, (approx. $3.50) Association Press. An anthology which follows the Master's life from childhood through adult experiences to Resurrection triumph.

THE PRACTICE OF PRAYER, Albert D. Belden, (75 cents), Independent Press, Memorial Hall, London, E.C. 4. A deeply moving yet simply written introduction to the heart of prayer as the strengthening and sustaining power which makes a Church of determined souls.

THE JOURNAL, John Woolman, (approx. $1.75), Everyman's Library. The chronicle of spiritual development in the life of an American businessman, born in 1720, in New Jersey.

A TESTAMENT OF DEVOTION, Thomas R. Kelly, ($1.00) Harper Bros. One of this century's most notable devotional writings, being five extraordinary chapters, including "The Simplificational Life."

IV. *Some books dealing with Great Issues:*

CHURCH ORDER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, ($2.50), Independent Press, Memorial Hall, London, E.C. 4. A thorough discussion of the New Testament teaching about the Church in every different direction.

THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS AMERICA, Gerald Kennedy, Harper Bros. A vigorous and striking treatment of some of the modern issues of major importance.

THE QUEST FOR CHURCH UNITY, Matthew Spinka, Macmillan. ($2.50) The most thorough treatment of Church unity through the ages, written in exceptionally clear language.

V. *Religious Thought and Beliefs:*

SANDALS IN THE MOSQUE, Kenneth Cragg ($2.75), Pilgrim Press. Christians are invited to explore the world of Islam.

VI. *The Church and Its Mission:*

DR. SCHWEITZER OF LAMBARENE, Norman Cousins ($3.95) available from Pilgrim Press. Editor of Saturday Review appraises famous doctor in his many roles.

THREE CHURCHES AND A MODEL T, Philip J. Cleveland ($3.50) available from Pilgrim Press. Unusual stories of parishioners by a country preacher.

WILFRED GRENFELL, HIS LIFE AND WORK, J. Lennox Kerr ($4.00) available from Pilgrim Press. Stirring adventures of a consecrated modern Missionary doctor.

VII. *Biography:*

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF CECIL B. DEMILLE, ($5.95) available from Pilgrim Press. The creator of outstanding religious films shares his experiences.

EDISON, A BIOGRAPHY, Matthew Josephson ($6.95) available from Pilgrim Press. A graphic account of the life and legacy of the great inventor.

KAGAWA, JAPANESE PROPHET, Jessie M. Trout, ($1.00) available from Pilgrim Press. A short account of his life, with quotations from his writings.

FROM THE LETTER BOX

Editor: THE CONGREGATIONALIST

I write to urge your readers not to spend their money on further litigation against the United Church of Christ.

1. Surely there are better places for us to spend the money entrusted to us as stewards for Christ. No one denies the worth of supporting the church each of us loves, and its outreach with other churches.

2. Many people question the moral value of further litigation. It will seek to have the courts apply legal coercion against our fellow-churches which are now a part of the United Church. These people question whether such legal coercion accords with the mutual respect we have for the opinions of others and which we expect for our views.

3. Future litigation, to succeed, must secure such legal coercion. Such success, even if it is morally right, is very unlikely.

I served from 1954-1961 as a member and as chairman of the General Council Commission on Christian Unity, and felt it my duty to familiarize myself with the litigation. The Cadman Decision in 1954 and Judge Dimock's recent Rulings have given legal approval to many parts of the Constitution of the General Council and of the United Church. At these points these Constitutions are part of the *res judicata*. What chance do future suits have of setting these points aside?

Before deciding to support future litigation, why not write me and let me send you a list of these points which the courts have accepted? Then you can come to your own conclusions as to whether future litigation will succeed or not.

West Dennis, Mass. (REV.) DAVID NELSON BEACH

Editor's Note. It is understood that opinions stated in the letter published in this column are those of the writer, but that these are not necessarily shared by the Editor or by the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.